

Now is time to volunteer help Referral agency needs people

By MERIL EDWARDS
Battalion Reporter

If you want to coach a parks and recreation softball team, help in a nursing home or just spend some time with underprivileged children, now is the time to volunteer.

Student Volunteer Services is a Texas A&M University service that acts as a referral agency between students and campus or community organizations which need volunteers.

SVS is organized as an 11-member student board of directors. Board chairman Janet Cooper, a senior plant science major, said there is no membership in SVS.

"Students get information from us and then volunteer on their own," Cooper said. "We try to check and see if the job is getting done so we can send somebody else if it's not. Mainly, we're just the middleman."

Each spring, SVS selects a new board of directors. Cooper said the

deadline for applying for a position is April 9. Interested students may pick up an application from the SVS cubicle in room 216 of the Memorial Student Center. Applicants must have some type of volunteer experience and carry a 2.25 grade point ratio.

"Lots of students get involved with SVS because it looks good on their resumes," Cooper said, "but they usually end up really liking the work."

Some of the agencies SVS works with are Bryan Hospital, Brazos Valley Geriatrics Center, Boys Club, the parks and recreation departments of both Bryan and College Station and Neal Center.

Cooper said she did volunteer work at Neal Center, a day care center in Bryan for underprivileged children.

"We taught kids how to brush their teeth and helped them with the letters of the alphabet," she

said. "It was a rewarding experience."

Cooper said SVS always needs volunteers to go to nursing homes to spend time with the patients, help them write letters and just visit with them.

Debbie Cardwell, an SVS student director, said she does volunteer work four hours a week at Crisis Hotline.

"People call with all kinds of problems like suicide, depression and loneliness," Cardwell said. "We do a little counseling, but usually try to refer them to someone who can help them. It's definitely worth my time, even though it can be depressing,

but just the fact that I'm helping is rewarding."

Another student director, Melesa Spreen, helps out at Bryan Hospital in the physical therapy department. "I help give the patients whirlpools, hot packs and things like that," she said. "It's only for a couple of hours each week and I like the work."

A big project for SVS this semester will be an April 28 arts and crafts fair. The event will be co-sponsored with the College Station Parks and Recreation Department at the opening of Oaks Park on Highway 30 and Stallings Drive.

Cooper said approximately 50 people volunteered for SVS programs last fall.

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